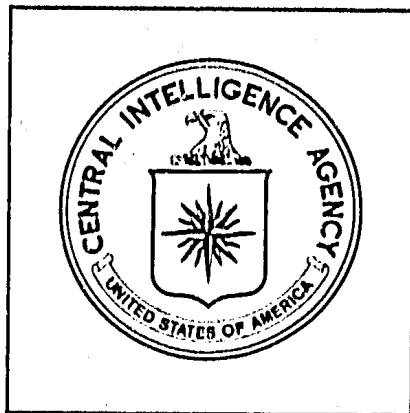


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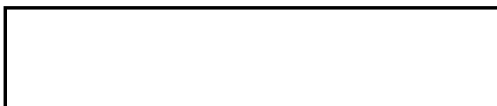
STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

On file Department of Agriculture release instructions apply.

- State Department review completed

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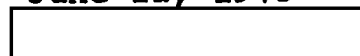


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Soviet Regime Strokes Nonconformists

The regime, having recently subjected cultural nonconformists to some harsh treatment [redacted]

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[redacted] is now dangling a small carrot in front of Moscow's unconventional artists. It continues to temporize, however, on most of their longstanding demands. As a result, some of the artists see a ray of hope on the horizon, and others remain skeptical of their prospects.

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The artists' hopes were raised by a cordial, two-hour meeting on June 9 of a leading spokesman for the group and officials of the Moscow city party committee. The officials were noncommittal, but listened sympathetically to complaints about the recent harassment of the unconventional artists and agreed to raise the matter with their party superiors. The two sides also discussed the possibility of a large, public, indoor exhibit this fall, and the chances for opening a hard currency store as an outlet for nonconformist art. The artists now sell only privately, mainly to ranking Soviet officials and foreign diplomats.

Many of the other nonconformists, including the respected Oskar Rabin who recalled the conflict last month over the aborted Leningrad exhibit, say that optimism is premature until some practical benefits develop. In view of the past history of the artists' problems with the regime, and with the leadership marking time on cultural policy, there is good reason for skepticism.

There is some circumstantial evidence that the decision to tamp down the conflict with the nonconformists was made on at least as high a level as the Central Committee and that it hinged on the party's realization that the artists' contacts with the Western press--and Western interest in their plight--had

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not fallen off as much as the regime believed. The June 9 meeting was suggested by officials of the Central Committee Cultural Department. At the meeting, the Moscow party officials complained about the artists' connections with foreign journalists and the resulting adverse coverage of the Soviet cultural scene in the West. Aware of the role played by official concern for the Soviet image abroad in regime-nonconformist relations, the artists' spokesman pointedly suggested that Western coverage would improve or disappear if the artists' situation became more "normal."

The regime's willingness at least to discuss the subject appears designed to take the artists' story out of the headlines while the leadership continues to grope for longer term guidelines for cultural policy. The tactics are relatively simple, but effective: the hopes raised at the June 9 meeting seem to have induced the nonconformists to remain "reasonably quiet," pending developments in the fall.

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Hungary Resolves Two Contentious
Issues with the US

Budapest has given ground on two controversial issues, suggesting that the Hungarians want to inject new momentum into relations with the US.

Last week, the Hungarians showed some flexibility on the family reunification issue when they said they will allow the son of a Hungarian-born US citizen to emigrate. Budapest had taken no action in this case--which had attracted congressional attention--arguing that the son's emigration was prohibited by Hungarian law.

Early this week, Budapest said it will pay a claims installment on the basis of US data, even though it continues to have "reservations" about the US figures. Under the accord signed in 1973, the amount of Hungarian payments to the US is pegged to the level of bilateral trade, and the two sides have disagreed over 1974 trade statistics.

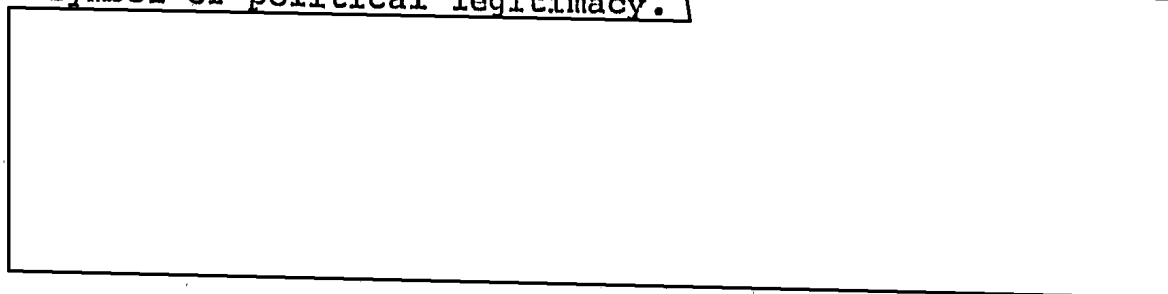
Budapest's actions clearly seem intended to spur forward movement at a time when the two capitals have recently exchanged new ambassadors. In fact, a Foreign Ministry official recently suggested that US Ambassador McAuliffe seek an appointment with party leader Kadar, who seldom sees Western diplomats.

The Hungarians, who have serious economic problems, may be looking to get some economic benefits from the US. During the recent visit of Undersecretary of Agriculture Campbell, the Hungarians made a pitch for credits to finance the purchase of soybean meal and raised the possibility of expanding cooperation in other agricultural spheres. The Hungarians, however, are unlikely to step out ahead of Moscow on the most-favored-nation issue.

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Budapest also has shown interest in removing certain travel restrictions and is eager for the US to return the Crown of St. Stephen--a traditional symbol of political legitimacy.

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Czech-Slovak Frictions

The party registered its concern over increased friction between the Czech and Slovak nationalities in advance of the election of party leader Husak as Czechoslovakia's first Slovak president.

A highly unusual commentary that appeared in the party's theoretical journal, *Tribuna*, on May 21 openly confirmed the existence of antagonism between the Czechs and Slovaks. The article ostensibly warned both against adopting "nationalist arguments," but the Czechs were the main target. The journal sought to counter complaints that the minority Slovaks, who constitute 30 percent of the population, enjoy an overly large share of the country's budget and that as a result Slovakia is booming at the expense of Czech lands.

In fact, recent Western visitors to Czechoslovakia report that they are struck by the general feeling of dynamism in Slovakia and with the growth and development in evidence there. In the Czech lands, and particularly in Prague, on the other hand, an atmosphere of lethargic stagnation prevails.

Any hints of favoritism toward the Slovaks is politically sensitive and potentially damaging to Husak and the other Slovaks who now dominate the regime. There have been rumors that Alois Indra, the Czech head of the Federal Assembly and one of Husak's major rivals, has tried to use the nationality issue to strengthen his position within the leadership.

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USSR-Japan: Joint Fishing Project

The Soviet Union and Japan, the world's leading fishing nations, signed an agreement last week to develop joint salmon-breeding facilities in the northwest Pacific. Work on the project will probably begin later this summer.

Japan had pushed for joint salmon-breeding operations since 1962. The Soviets first showed some interest this spring--probably because they recognized that salmon stocks needed rebuilding--and proposed a joint project that would include breeding facilities on southern Sakhalin and on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Japan balked at including Kamchatka, but facilities will probably be established on Sakhalin.

Japan sought assurances that Soviet trawlers operating north of Hokkaido would try to avoid damaging Japanese fishing nets. The Soviets agreed to continue to take preventive measures, but refused to give a clear-cut response to Japan's request to exercise restraint in their trawling operations near Japan's coastal waters.

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